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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the results of research on reform of state and national policy affecting families and children. The document begins with a rationale for change, and follows with four chapters that identify barriers stemming from attitudes, system organization, resource limitations, and technical problems. Each chapter suggests strategies for overcoming these barriers. Problems stemming from attitudes include resistance to change, deficit mentality, over-specialization, public skepticism, politics, and "turf battles." Suggested strategies include: (1) formulating a clear vision; (2) instituting cross-disciplinary and cultural training; (3) soliciting public involvement; (4) communicating successes; (5) changing agency work environment; (6) building coalitions; and (7) developing collective ownership. Systems difficulties include lack of a policy framework, diffused authority, complexities of funding, inadequate communication among agencies, lack of commitment, and ineffective personnel management. Suggested solutions include providing leadership, delegating authority, combining coordinating bodies, establishing interagency councils, simplifying eligibility, adopting incentives, and reforming personnel systems. The resource problems are limited funding and lack of staff capacity, to be overcome by leveraging dollars, addressing categorical funding, and investing in professional development. Technical challenges include: (1) the length of time needed to launch new projects; (2) ineffective data management systems; (3) misinterpretation of federal regulations; (4) dearth of information on new approaches; (5) design difficulties; and (6) lack of access. Strategies for overcoming these technical problems include developing integrated information systems, sharing best practices, addressing confidentiality, and expanding model programs. (ME)

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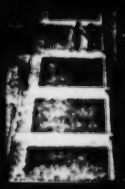

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Policy Research

Changing Systems *for* Children *and* Families

by Linda McCart

Since their initial meeting in 1908 to discuss interstate water problems, the Governors have worked through the National Governors' Association to deal collectively with issues of public policy and governance. The association's ongoing mission is to support the work of the Governors by providing a bipartisan forum to help shape and implement national policy and to solve state problems.

The members of the National Governors' Association are the Governors of the fifty states, the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, and the commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. The association has a nine-member Executive Committee, a Task Force on State Management, and three standing committees—on Economic Development and Commerce, Human Resources, and Natural Resources. Through NGA's committees, the Governors examine and develop policy and address key state and national issues. Special task forces often are created to focus gubernatorial attention on federal legislation or on state-level issues.

The association works closely with the administration and Congress on state-federal policy issues through its offices in the Hall of the States in Washington, D.C. The association serves as a vehicle for sharing knowledge of innovative programs among the states and provides technical assistance and consultant services to Governors on a wide range of management and policy issues.

The Center for Policy Research is the research and development arm of NGA. The center is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The center works in a number of policy fields, including agriculture and rural development, economic development, education, energy and environment, health, information management, social services, trade, training and employment, and transportation. The priorities for the association's research are set by the Governors.

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Contents

Acknowledgements 5

Preface 6

Executive Summary 9

The Rationale for Change 12

Early Predictors of Problem Behaviors

Critical Attributes of Effective Programs

Challenges to Changing the System

Next Steps

The Challenges of Attitudes 18

Identifying Attitudinal Barriers

Overcoming Attitudinal Barriers

The Challenges of the System 27

Identifying Systems Barriers

Overcoming Systems Barriers

The Challenges of Resources 34

Identifying Resource Barriers

Overcoming Resource Barriers

Technical Challenges 39

Identifying Technical Barriers

Overcoming Technical Barriers

Implications for Policymakers 48

Next Steps

Endnotes 50

Bibliography 52

Appendix A:
Protocol for National Center for Services Integration Focus Groups 57

Appendix B:
Survey Instrument—State Approaches to Improving Services to Children and Families 58

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Preface

Governors and other policymakers at the state and local levels have become increasingly concerned about the status of young children and the inability of government programs to produce the desired results. The continued focus on achieving the National Education Goals and the growing cost of programs to support dysfunctional individuals have compelled them to examine the current service delivery system and to seek new strategies for making programs and services more effective. Interagency collaboration and services integration are being used in a number of states to create more comprehensive services that focus on prevention and on the family as the fundamental building block of a well-functioning society.

However, these approaches are not magic bullets. Agencies working together cannot produce substantial new resources to fund services that historically have been underfunded. No amount of collaboration or services integration can overcome the obstacles created by the congressional committee structure or the politics of meeting constituent demands. At least in the short run, these approaches can neither restore public confidence in government nor ensure that children are supported in their growth and development. *Service Integration: A Twenty-Year Retrospective*, a 1991 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on government efforts to develop integrated service delivery systems, concludes that though services integration initiatives frequently have been successful in making services more accessible to individuals, they have had little impact on a highly fragmented human services system.

The good news is that policymakers understand these shortcomings and are focusing on more systemic reform initiatives that combine services integration concepts and strategies for reinventing government. Current efforts are distinguished from those of the past by a better understanding of what is needed to reform the human services system and a recognition of the need to work together to accomplish a common goal. Current efforts also are characterized by a more "bottom-up" approach, rather than the top-down strategy used during the 1970s, and by a focus on children and family outcomes, rather than on numbers served. There is a greater understanding that even the most aggressive reform efforts at the local or community level will not have a substantial or lasting impact without corresponding reform efforts in state central offices. If the large bureaucracies do not change, it is likely that their weight will eventually smother innovations by communities. There also appears to be a greater focus on changing the way institutions deliver services (e.g., through reorganization, staff training, integrated management information systems, and

pooled funding) in contrast to prior efforts, which focused primarily on service delivery reforms (i.e., case management, home visiting, and new forms of intervention such as family support programs).

In addition, there is a new political culture that favors addressing the fundamental reform of federal, state, and local government. The temporary Joint Committee on Organization is charged with reviewing the structure and functions of congressional committees and subcommittees in order to consolidate oversight responsibility and eliminate overlap. The National Performance Review, an initiative led by Vice President Al Gore, examined ways to make the federal government more effective and efficient. The new Alliance for Redesigning Government, created in conjunction with the National Academy of Public Administration that is charged by Congress with improving governance at all levels, was formed to consolidate disparate government reform efforts and to create an information network so that individuals can learn from one another and overcome the barriers that lie in their way. These efforts provide additional support for states and localities interested in implementing systemic reform.

To assist Governors and other state policymakers in their reform efforts, the National Governors' Association developed this project to identify federal barriers to interagency collaboration and integrated systems of services for children and families and strategies for overcoming them. Focus groups, individual interviews, and conversations with those engaged in reform efforts soon revealed that these fledgling initiatives are not mature enough to provide much insight about specific statutes or regulations that impede effective service delivery. The research did reveal that the five states that are participating in the PEW Charitable Trusts' Children's Initiative—Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Rhode Island—have began to specify federal statutory and regulatory barriers to designing a new system. The Center for Assessment and Policy Development, which is directing the initiative, will be working with the administration and the states to reduce these barriers.

This report highlights what is known about the broad challenges states have encountered along the road to reform. It is intended to guide those struggling with similar issues in creating a new system of services for children and their families. It is hoped that the report will inform the discussion about how to implement systemic reform and help states and localities move forward to ensure a better society—one that is based on strong families living in prospering communities.

on behalf
of children in
the interest
of a just society
and America's
social and
economic future.

Executive Summary

"There is no provision that says we cannot change. . . . It starts by recognizing that business as usual is a guarantee that this generation of leaders will fail the next generation of Americans." *HARD TRUTHS/TOUGH CHOICES*

The debate is over. There is no longer a question of whether increased national attention should be directed to children. The question is how policymakers should go about reforming government to better support children, their families, and the communities in which they live. Much of this reform is now underway. Led by Governors, about thirty states have implemented various initiatives to ensure that services and programs are more responsive to community and family needs. Numerous communities across the nation also are engaged in comprehensive reform efforts.

The impetus for change stems from continuing evidence that children are in trouble. High school dropout rates remain stagnant at distressingly high levels, pregnancies among unwed teens continue at an alarming rate, welfare caseloads continue to rise, and businesses persevere with efforts to get government to recognize that the emerging workforce is not qualified to meet the needs of a global economy. These indicators are troubling because they threaten the public's belief in a just society and also because they give rise to concerns about whether today's children will have a future as bright as past generations. Having recognized the problem, policymakers become more disturbed because they do not know how to correct it.

The need for reform is evidenced by recent public opinion polls that suggest a growing belief that government has broken its covenant with the American people to address the needs of its youngest citizens. Only slightly more than half of all Americans have confidence in their state government, down from 73 percent in 1987, with approximately 60 percent expressing confidence in local government.[1] The polls also indicate that a majority of Americans see the problems of children as an integral part of larger national concerns such as the economy, health care, and the budget deficit. Although voters want to see significant improvements, they have little faith that government will do what is best for children.[2]

Governors and other state policymakers have accepted the challenge of building a more comprehensive system of services for children and families. As laboratories of the nation, states are undergoing fundamental reform in a number of domains, including education, human services, health care, and administration. In the human services field, some states have created children's cabinets to establish a vision for children and family services and to develop strategic plans for achieving it. Other states have implemented "one-stop" service centers, streamlined eligibility processes, and decategorized funding in order to improve access to services. A few states have focused on moving decisionmaking down to localities, cross-training agency staff, and removing state and federal impediments to improved

service delivery. Still others have used structural reorganization to facilitate interagency and intra-agency collaboration.

These reform efforts are generally guided by a few basic principles.

- Families should be recognized as the fundamental building blocks of society. As such, they have primary responsibility for nurturing their children and for ensuring that their basic needs are met. Families should be supported in their efforts to fulfill these obligations.
- The lives of families are linked to the individuals and institutions in communities. Consequently, communities play a critical role in supporting families and in reducing family dysfunction.
- Services should be delivered in a comprehensive, integrated manner that provides continuity of support over time and responds to the changing needs of children at each developmental stage, from conception to adulthood.
- Services should focus on prevention, rather than address more serious and costly problems later on. Services should address the needs of the entire family in a holistic approach. Problems should not be defined according to available funding streams and professional disciplines.
- Reform efforts should be driven by specific outcomes for children and families. Accountability structures must establish fair responsibility for the outcomes and offer appropriate incentives to encourage innovation and experimentation.

An examination of the current system soon reveals that it does not meet these principles. Although these programs and services were developed with good intentions, they arise from different congressional committees; are administered by different federal, state, and local agencies; are funded by varying sources that have unique eligibility requirements; and are delivered by different organizations to discrete populations. In addition, no entity is responsible for seeing how the various programs and services fit together or for ensuring that the guiding policies and regulations are not duplicative or contradictory.

Trying to forge a system out of existing programs and services is neither easy nor painless. Comprehensive reform is a time-consuming task, but a piecemeal approach will not produce the changes needed to realign government to meet new constituent needs. The challenges to fundamental reform of children and family services are many. They are borne of an interlocking set of attitudes, behaviors, and practices that often create disorder in service delivery systems. These challenges can be grouped into four broad categories—attitudes, both of individuals and organizations; systems, in terms of organization and policies; resources, both human and fiscal; and technical (i.e., those relating to administration and design). Among the most pressing obstacles to reform are the following.

- Attitudes of career employees who do not see or understand the need for change.
- Philosophical differences and professional orientations that lead to specialization and that impact the way individuals and agencies work together.
- Lack of public understanding of existing programs and services, public distrust of government, and public demand for quick results.
- Difficulty in moving from a crisis-oriented approach to meeting children's needs to a more preventive approach in order to address problems before they reach the crisis stage.
- Lack of a national framework for children's services and, frequently, the lack of a state agenda for children and families with accompanying goals and objectives and specific outcome measures.
- Complexity of intergovernmental relations (i.e., the ways in which levels of government interact), making it difficult to reach agreement on missions and goals and on regulations and procedures.

- Fiscal fragmentation in the way money flows to states and localities and different eligibility requirements, reporting and accounting requirements, and reimbursement procedures.
- Lack of resources for planning and implementing systemic reform, for staff training, and for actual services.
- Lack of capacity to collect, analyze, and use data effectively.
- Lack of quality information on successful programs, on how they can be adapted to different settings, and on how they can be replicated on a broad scale.

There are various strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Research and recent experience suggest that key among them is a clear vision for change that is communicated to all the stakeholders and to which everyone is held accountable. Fundamental reform also requires bold and strategic thinking and challenging the status quo. It requires a willingness to take risks, to experiment, and to learn from failures. It requires putting aside debates over power and control and a desire to work together to achieve a common goal. Finally, change requires leadership to closely examine what works and a willingness to invest only in those programs that will make the vision a reality.

Although change is not always clearly visible, there is evidence that states are moving in the right direction. Unrest among career employees, renewed battles over turf, increased requests for information on what other states are doing, and tensions between new goals and old rules indicate that the field of human services is in transition. To ensure that reform continues to move forward, Governors and state and local policymakers must restore the public's faith in government by focusing on results and more efficient use of existing resources.

Fundamental change requires obtaining broad ownership of an agenda for reform by listening to citizens' concerns and ideas during town hall meetings and incorporating these into the vision statement. In addition, policymakers can empower individuals responsible for translating policy into practice by making them partners in crafting solutions.

Policymakers will need to help institutions make the paradigm shifts from crisis intervention to prevention and from monitoring and auditing to support and technical assistance by focusing more on "steering"—defining problems broadly, establishing policy, leveraging resources, and evaluating performance. Delegating authority for decisionmaking down into the organization and charging mid-level managers with the responsibility for "rowing"—carrying out established policies, defining processes, and achieving results—help create environments conducive to change.

Policymakers also should ask for a complete inventory of programs and services being provided, amounts being spent, and individuals being served. This information provides the foundation for examining which programs are working and, subsequently, for establishing priorities for spending.

Finally, Governors and other policymakers should help all the stakeholders understand the link between the lack of comprehensive quality services for at-risk children and families and the rising costs of school failures, teen pregnancies, juvenile delinquency, welfare, community disintegration, violence, and prisons. Building broad public support for change requires a convincing argument that reform is in everyone's best interest and is critical to the nation's well-being.

This report begins with a rationale for fundamental reform and analyzes what research and recent experience reveal about the challenges to changing the current system. It then suggests strategies for overcoming them. The report concludes with the implications of these challenges and strategies for Governors and other policymakers at the state and local levels.

The Rationale for Reform

Children are in trouble. Advocates have been noting this for years, and public unease about the state of American children has burgeoned in the last two years. A recent memorandum to President Bill Clinton from the philanthropic community states that the plight of America's children and youth is among the most compelling challenges of the 1990s. Numerous reports and policy statements reflect an imperative to act on behalf of children in the interest of a just society and America's social and economic future.

This growing concern about the status of the nation's youngest citizens stems from evidence that increasing numbers of children are not growing up to be successfully functioning adults. Many start school at a disadvantage and then spend time and energy trying to catch up. Finally, discouraged by a system that fails to meet their needs, many leave school without the skills and motivation they need to hold a decent job. Businesses warn of an increasingly unqualified workforce that is incapable of meeting the needs of a global economy. The number of welfare recipients continues to increase as does the number of unwed adolescents giving birth to children they are economically and emotionally unprepared to raise.

These indicators are troubling because they offend the American people's sense of what is good and just and because they threaten America's future as a prosperous society. Concern continues to escalate because even though the problems are recognized, the nation continues to struggle with how to correct them. In a recent article for *The Aspen Institute Quarterly*, William Galston states that Americans believe that the well-being of children and families will require greater assistance from community institutions and government as well as from private businesses.[3] At the same time, many Americans are skeptical about the capacity of bureaucratic institutions to effectively deliver the help that is needed. Support for promising solutions sometimes is hard to secure because of a lack of public faith that organized society can change things for the better.

Governors and other policymakers would argue that the situation is not hopeless. Much can be and is being done in states and communities across the nation. Governors have recognized the critical importance of investing in children. They have taken significant steps to create comprehensive systems designed to prevent later problems such as school failure, early unmarried childbearing, welfare dependency, and juvenile violence.

Early Predictors of Problem Behaviors

Research confirms that some early predictors of problem behaviors can be identified. There also is dramatic proof of the interaction of known risk factors and the impact that multiple factors have on children's well-being.

For example, it is known that children who encounter even one risk factor are no more likely to suffer later problems than are children experiencing no risk factors. Research also indicates that when two or more stresses occur together, such as being born into poverty and at low birthweight, the probability of a damaging outcome goes up at least fourfold. When four risks are present, problems increase by a factor of ten.[4]

Behavior studies indicate that the best predictors of later problems occur early in the life cycle. These predictors or indicators include poverty, low birthweight, teen births, untreated childhood health problems, lack of bonding with a caring adult, and failure to develop minimal coping, language, and reasoning skills prior to school entry. These risk factors are significant because they occur at a point when it is most economical to intervene and because each can be successfully addressed by interventions that are known to work.[5]

> *"We know what works. We need to learn from these successful programs and develop a strategy similar to that used for Head Start to market them to the public."*
> PROGRAM MANAGER,
> STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

For example, research confirms that combining basic education and skills training can help a welfare mother move into the labor market.[6] When her earnings are coupled with adequate child support and benefits from the Earned Income Tax Credit, she comes close to having an income at or near the poverty level. Other research has found that providing prenatal care early and continuously throughout a woman's pregnancy greatly reduces the likelihood of low-birthweight infants.[7] Although there is little hard evidence of the effectiveness of comprehensive programs for teen mothers, there is some indication that participation can improve decisionmaking skills, enhance self-esteem, and have substantial impacts on the employment potential and subsequent welfare receipt of teen parents, as well as beneficial impacts on the educational achievement and well-being of their children.[8] Research also indicates that the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) program is effective in identifying potential health problems in young children.[9] Finally, several studies confirm that parenting programs, such as Parents As Teachers, and quality early childhood development programs, such as Head Start, can facilitate child-adult bonding and enhance learning skills.[10]

Critical Attributes of Effective Programs

Several critical attributes are needed to enhance the effectiveness of known interventions. Author and Harvard lecturer Lisbeth Schorr describes four that she believes are the most important.[11]

- Successful programs are comprehensive, intensive, flexible, and responsive.
- Successful programs deal with children as part of families, and with families as part of communities.
- Staff in successful programs have the time, skills, and support to build relationships of trust and respect with children and families that continue over time.
- Successful programs have a long-term, preventive orientation and they continue to evolve over time.

The National Center for Services Integration suggests three additional attributes of effective programs.[12]

- Successful programs are driven by specific outcomes for children and families.
- Successful programs have sufficient resources for staff training, strategic planning, and evaluation systems to track progress toward goals and identify areas of concern.
- Successful programs are supported by new relationships among federal, state, and local policymakers.

Unfortunately, these attributes are at odds with the systems that exist to address the risk factors that contribute to children's later misfortunes. Arising from federal statutes, the majority of interventions that are designed to provide health care, education, and social services are highly fragmented, crisis-oriented, and serve a limited population with specific problems. Frontline staff are burdened by burgeoning caseloads and are constrained by multiple rules and conflicting regulations. Categorical funding, specialized training that produces specialized workers, and accountability systems that focus on numbers served rather than on positive impacts achieved contribute to the inability of large systems to effectively respond to the needs of families with multiple problems.

"We need a strategic reform system for children."
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

It also must be acknowledged that services and programs are not enough. Families are the fundamental building block of a strong society. They are relied upon to provide the basic essentials such as food and shelter and to nurture their children. They also are depended upon to serve as their child's first teacher by providing moral guidance, intellectual stimulation, and continuing encouragement for learning. The important role that families play in preventing poor outcomes must be recognized and reinforced. When families cannot perform these functions, community organizations and public agencies must fill the gap.

Finally, the critical role communities play in reducing multiple risk factors must be recognized. As researcher Nicholas Zill notes, the lives of most families are inextricably linked with the persons, organizations, and institutions of their community. A strong community can plan a major role in supporting the functioning of healthy families and in providing encouragement to families that are struggling. Research suggests that widespread family dysfunction can lead to a weakening of both formal and voluntary organizations that are instrumental in linking individuals and families with the community at large and in fostering desired goals and values. In addition, troubled families can weaken informal social controls such as the willingness to monitor the behavior of other people's children and maintain community standards. Families and communities are mutually dependent. A strong community needs a large number of healthy families. Similarly, troubled families may be more likely to overcome their problems if they are living in a strong community.[13]

Challenges to Changing the System

The challenges are clear.

- How can the relationships among federal, state, and local governments be redefined in order to guarantee accountability for public funds while ensuring that communities are supported in their efforts to support families?
- How can large public institutions be changed to incorporate the attributes of effective programs?
- How can government create new cultures and environments where children and families become the primary focus, where frontline staff have the skills and flexibility needed to address the multiple needs of troubled families, and where prevention becomes the rule rather than the exception?

Next Steps

"The President and Governors should take a more active leadership role by convening the CEOs of major companies to discuss the issues and the impact it [lack of investment in children] has on them."
LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL

Fundamental change in institutions and in programs requires bold and strategic thinking. It requires leaders who have a long-term vision of better outcomes for children and families. Systemic reform demands a willingness to admit that federal solutions to local problems no longer work. It requires an ability to challenge the status quo

and a willingness to experiment because no one has successfully put together all of the elements needed to effect change.

This report examines the challenges states and localities are facing in implementing a more rational system of services that:

- improves service quality and effectiveness by focusing on a more holistic approach to service provision that builds on the strengths of individuals and families and addresses their needs in a comprehensive and integrated manner;
- improves access to comprehensive services through increased local flexibility; and
- improves program efficiency by reducing waste and duplication and by shifting the focus from crisis intervention to prevention.

Much of the initial work on barriers to services integration was conducted in the early 1970s by the Task Force on Administrative and Organizational Constraints. Established by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), the task force was asked to identify administrative and organizational practices within government that interfere with the integration of services and to offer recommendations for overcoming such barriers. Lessons from reform efforts over the last three decades—such as the Community Action and Model Cities programs and the Settlement Houses—offer additional insights about the impediments to services integration. Based on conversations with those involved in recent experiments and a review of other literature, the impediments have not changed substantially. Fortunately, research and current state and local efforts offer some guidance on how to minimize the challenges and overcome the barriers.

This report is based on focus group discussions and interviews with individuals in states and communities and on selected studies that have examined barriers to an integrated services system for children and their families. The focus groups and interviews were conducted during the winter and spring of 1993 with state and local policymakers in Colorado, Georgia, Ohio, and South Carolina (see Appendix A for the protocol used for the focus groups held in Colorado and Georgia). Information also was obtained from conversations with state policymakers in various meetings and from a national survey on state coordinating mechanisms for children and family services (see Appendix B for a copy of the survey instrument). The next four chapters explore the information gleaned from prior and current efforts to create more integrated service delivery systems. The challenges are grouped into four broad categories: attitudes, both of individuals and organizations; systems, in terms of organization and policies; resources, both human and fiscal; and technical (i.e., those relating to administration and design). Table 1 lists specific barriers to systemic reform in these four categories and strategies for overcoming them. The challenges and strategies are discussed in detail in the four chapters. The last chapter highlights the implications of these challenges for Governors and other policymakers.

It should be noted that though many states and localities are moving in the right direction, the current initiatives are too young to shed much insight into specific statutes, regulations, policies, or procedures that may impede their progress. However, state and local experiences reveal several broad issues that create confusion and make collaboration difficult.

Table 1

Challenges to and Strategies for Systemic Reform

	Challenges	Strategies
Attitudes	Resistance to change	Formulating a clear vision
		Developing specific goals and measurable objectives
	Deficit mentality	Recognizing individual and family strengths
	Specialized professionals	Instituting cross-disciplinary and cultural training
	Public skepticism	Soliciting public involvement
		Communicating successes
	Organizational structure	Changing the environment
	Politics	Building coalitions and targeting resources
	Turf and power	Developing collective ownership
Systems	Lack of a policy framework	Providing leadership and creating a vision
	Diffused authority and responsibility	Delegating authority
		Combining coordinating bodies
		Establishing interagency councils
	Funding complexities	Using fiscal intermediaries
		Simplifying eligibility
	Inadequate communication	Improving communication flow
	Lack of commitment	Adopting incentives for change
	Ineffective personnel management	Reforming personnel systems

	Challenges	Strategies
Resources	Limited funding	Leveraging dollars
	Categorical funding	Addressing categorical funding
	Lack of staff capacity	Investing in professional development
		Shifting state paradigms
Technical	Insufficient time	Providing time and support for change
	Ineffective data management systems	Developing integrated information systems
	Differing regulatory interpretations	Maximizing flexibility
	Dearth of information on promising approaches	Sharing best practices
	Confidentiality restrictions	Addressing confidentiality
	Design difficulties	Establishing outcomes
		Investing in evaluation
		Crafting governance structures
		Expanding model programs
	Lack of access	Improving access

The Challenges of Attitudes

"Within state agencies, there is a resistance to give up roles and functions and make changes. There is an 'old guard' mentality that works more strongly against change than for change." PROGRAM MANAGER, STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Identifying Attitudinal Barriers

Research and recent interviews reveal that one of the most persistent challenges to systemic reform is attitudes. Noting that attitudes are created by the systems in which bureaucrats work, the 1972 HEW report states that attitudinal barriers, both individual and organizational, stem from historical, legislative, and educational factors. Current reform efforts also suggest that the structure of organizations and politics play a significant role in shaping attitudes.

"Existing programs are no longer in line with our new philosophy. We changed our philosophy, but the programs and mind-sets haven't changed."
DIRECTOR, LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Resistance to Change

Historical factors arise from the history of the agency and are frequently evidenced by the comment, "We've always done it this way." They are rooted in the nature of bureaucracies and in career employees who neither see nor understand the need for change. One state human services commissioner recently commented that the mid-level managers in his agency represented the most formidable challenge to implementing new ways of doing business.

"The legislative process itself, both at the federal and state level, often results in the creation of specific programs to respond to special constituent concerns. This results in a very fragmented delivery system."
STATE DIRECTOR, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION

Deficit Mentality

The influence of legislative factors begins with the congressional committee structure, proceeds through statutes, and resides in implementing policies and procedures. (Table 2 provides an overview of the congressional committee structure for selected programs.) One example is the way federal and state legislation targets special populations. The policymakers who are responsible for implementation subsequently assume that such individuals need special help. Procedures are designed that focus on the deficits rather than the strengths of individuals seeking assistance. This causes frontline staff—teachers, social workers, nurses, and counselors—to see the individuals they serve as dysfunctional and then to assume they know what is best for them. Families and individuals are seldom asked what they need. They are offered what is available and what the worker knows how to deliver.

Specialized Professionals

Educational experience gives rise to philosophical barriers and also contributes significantly to specialization. The clearest

case of differing philosophical perspectives is evidenced in statements frequently heard from school principals when their permission is sought to establish a social services center at the school: "The mission of schools is to impart knowledge; it is not to deliver social services." Or, "We are teachers. We are here to educate children, not to make sure that they have food, clothing, and shelter. That's the parent's job." Differences in the cultural background of staff and the individuals they serve also contribute to attitudinal barriers.

"We need training to learn how to work together. You aren't born knowing how and they don't teach you that in school or at work."
LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Specialization is rooted in institutions of higher learning that offer special courses for nurses, teachers, and social workers but fail to instruct students on how to work together. It permeates the way agencies are organized by dividing programs and staff serving the same family into discrete units. Specialization also is driven by funding, both from categorical programs and special grants. Initiatives are developed around what federal agencies and foundations will fund rather than what is really needed in a state or community. Rarely are efforts developed based on strategic long-term plans.

"We need to change the mind-set of the public, the agency staff, and the clients."
LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL

"We need to educate the community that putting money into children and family services is an investment."
DIRECTOR, LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Public Skepticism

Education also impacts the attitudes of the public. Recent public opinion polls on children suggest that the public strongly supports making children's needs, especially access to health care, a higher priority of government. Sponsored by the Coalition for America's Children, The Analysis Group—a bipartisan polling team—conducted a scientific public opinion telephone survey in 1991 that reached more than 6,100 American voters. The findings indicate that voters believe that children should be made a higher spending priority, at least in terms of using available funds if not always in terms of raising new revenues. The survey responses also suggest several reasons why it is difficult to translate this support into concrete action.[14]

- Although the public supports government making children a higher priority, it is skeptical of government. About 85 percent of those questioned agreed that political leaders were not doing enough to help solve the problems children face today. More than half of those polled said they were not confident that government will do what is right for children most of the time.
- Public distrust of government also is evident. More than 76 percent of Americans believe that most of the funds earmarked for children's programs never get to them.
- The public frequently cannot identify those programs that benefit children. Neither does it understand how to access these programs within government bureaucracies.
- There is a strong belief that the family is the most important protector of children. This belief is tempered by the public's ambivalence over the private nature of family concerns. By a ratio of 2-to-1, Americans prefer that government efforts be directed primarily to strengthening families rather than to protecting children. This assistance should be available to all families with children, not just to poor families.
- Citizen support for increased funding for children—through new taxes rather than cuts in other programs—is tied to the economy. In the public's mind, the status of children is linked with the overall well-being of the nation. Consequently, mandates for new government programs for children will be tempered by concerns about the condition of state and federal budgets.

"We need to change the attitudes of staff. Most of them don't know how to work with people with different backgrounds or from different cultures."
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Table 2

Congressional Committee Structure for Selected Programs

U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate
Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources • *Aid to Families with Dependent Children*	**Committee on Finance** Subcommittee on Social Security and FamilyPolicy • *Aid to Families with Dependent Children* • *Medicaid* Subcommittee on Health for Families and the Uninsured • *Medicaid*
Committee on Education and Labor Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education • *Chapter 1* • *Head Start* • *Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)*	**Committee on Labor and Human Resources** Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities • *Chapter 1* • *Head Start*
Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and the Environment • *Medicaid*	**Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry** Subcommittee on Nutrition and Investigations • *WIC*

U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education • *Aid to Families with Dependent Children* • *Chapter 1* • *Head Start* • *Medicaid* Subcommittee on Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies • *WIC*	**Committee on Appropriations** Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education • *Aid to Families with Dependent Children* • *Chapter 1* • *Head Start* • *Medicaid*
Committee on Government Operations • *Program implementation, including intergovernmental relationships among federal, state, and local governments*	**Governmental Affairs Committee** • *Program implementation, including intergovernmental relationships among federal, state, and local governments*

Source: Institute for Educational Leadership, Intergovernmental/Interagency Policy Exchange, *Ten Major Federal Programs Affecting Children and Families* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1992).

These findings suggest that building political support for fundamental reform will be extremely difficult.

"We have to change people's attitudes about clients and about government's role in strengthening families."
LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL

There are many who believe that the least government is the best government. This attitude is becoming more prevalent as states move forward with education reform. In at least three states—Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—a small group of vocal opponents recently have started criticizing state policymakers for attempting to implement outcomes-based education. Their opposition is based on their belief that such approaches undermine traditional learning and insert values into graduation requirements. This debate has spilled over into efforts to reform service systems for children and families because these individuals view such attempts as interfering with parental responsibility and family life.

We need time to prove that programs work. We can't show results in two or three years because it took us a generation to get into this mess."
DIRECTOR, LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

The phenomenon of "front-page news" contributes to public misperceptions of government programs. Mistakes are highlighted, subsequently resulting in additional resources being directed to the crisis rather than to a more rational assessment of what caused the problem initially and how it can be corrected. A recent example is the highly publicized incidents of students being slain in schools. The incidents fanned the flames for metal detectors and armed security guards, but little or no attention was given to finding out why fourteen-year-old students were carrying guns.

"We need leadership and permission to change the way we operate."
PROGRAM MANAGER, STATE SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Organizational Structure

Several attitudinal barriers are specific to organizations. First and foremost is the structure of organizations. Separate and largely autonomous program units discourage communication across programs and with other organizations. Structure also contributes to the culture of the organization. That culture may support and encourage change and risk taking, or it may insist on strict adherence to rules and regulations.

"Strong program allegiance from various constituent groups makes it hard to create the political consensus needed to act toward achievement of greater system integration and change."
STATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSIONER

Politics

Politics is another challenge to systemic reform efforts. As evidenced by political action committees and specialized advocacy groups at both the national and state levels, there is a strong desire to retain categorical programs in order to meet narrow constituent demands. One local elected official reported personal threats and slashed tires as a result of her support for more flexible use of dollars previously dedicated to a small program that was created to satisfy the demands of a special interest group.

Politics also contributes to the focus on meeting immediate demands rather than investing in the development of long-term solutions. Elected officials at all levels could fill volumes with stories of public demands for quick results. Even when political leaders manage to institute fundamental reform, the length of Governors' and other legislative leaders' terms of office, coupled with the energy needed to focus on reelection, make it difficult to sustain the change movement over the long haul.

Research indicates that organizational change is essentially a political issue. Fundamental change needs powerful constituencies in order to survive. Without strong support for reform—from advocates willing to look beyond their special interests and from elected officials willing to look beyond the polls and the next election—it is hard for agencies to adopt new missions and to change

their focus from operating specific programs to providing comprehensive services to a broader population.

"We reached consensus among the group on the need for a family resource center and found a site, but the local community action agency wouldn't let us use the building and didn't want us to hold parenting classes for Head Start parents in the building where Head Start is located."
PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Turf and Power

Finally, a discussion about attitudinal barriers would be incomplete without addressing the issues of turf and control of resources. Although declining resources have helped bring various stakeholders to the table, there still is great reluctance to give up administrative control of programs or resources. Providers at the local level express fear of being absorbed into larger systems. They also note that though everyone is talking about collaboration, there still is fierce competition for even small amounts of new funding.

Overcoming Attitudinal Barriers

States have adopted several strategies to overcome the challenges of individual and organizational attitudes. Each focuses on making fundamental changes in organizational environments and enhancing the capacity for individuals to conduct business in new ways.

Formulating a Clear Vision

Research and recent experiences suggest that the most critical activity in efforts to change attitudinal barriers is a clear vision that has been formulated by a broad coalition of individuals and organizations. Visions help policymakers understand where they are going by providing a picture of what a reformed system would look like. The vision statement must be short, easily understood, and easily communicated. To be effective, it must be specific enough to enable individuals to identify with it, measure it, and accept ownership of it. The vision must be future-oriented with a clear understanding of the amount of time that will be required to achieve it. Finally, the vision must be shared by all of the appropriate stakeholders to ensure that it survives beyond the terms of elected officials.

Several states have drafted a vision statement and taken it to the public through town meetings and small focus groups. Colorado's effort to solicit public input on a new vision for families and children was led by Governor Roy Romer and First Lady Bea Romer. New Mexico followed a similar strategy, with Governor Bruce King and First Lady Alice King conducting town hall meetings across the state. The vision statement and action plan in both states were rewritten based on community input.

A recent report by the McKnight Foundation on its Aid To Families In Poverty Program states that a strong sense of mission is the stable core from which flexibility flows. The evaluation of thirty-four programs funded from 1988 to 1993 found that a shared vision is the "glue that holds together collaborative efforts across programs, agencies, and funding sources."[3] The evaluation also indicates that a strong sense of mission is especially important when service delivery involves diverse staff working independently across traditional boundaries such as school districts, county lines, and funding sources.

"Advocates are within the system, not outside. There is no marketing mechanism for children and they have a weak, unsophisticated political lobby."
DIRECTOR, FAMILY
RESOURCE CENTER

Developing Specific Goals and Measurable Objectives

Closely linked to a clear vision statement are specific goals and measurable objectives based on outcomes, not processes. Goals are broad statements of what the initiative hopes to achieve. They usually are future-oriented and rarely are revised. Objectives are specific, achievable, measurable, outcome-oriented statements of desired results. They serve as checkpoints along the road to achievement of the goals and may need to be adjusted as the initiative progresses. Objectives should reflect

the desired results for individuals and systems. The National Education Goals and their accompanying objectives are good examples of policy goals and objectives.

Several promising initiatives to help children and families have experienced great difficulty because they cannot articulate what it is they are trying to achieve in more specific terms. As in formulating the vision, it is important to obtain buy-in from a wide variety of stakeholders in determining goals and objectives. Frontline staff, consumers, businesses, parents, elected officials, and citizens all need to feel a sense of ownership in the development of outcomes for their community.

Recognizing Individual and Family Strengths

Two strategies for overcoming procedures that put individuals into categorical boxes are being used. The first is to create new assessment tools that force workers to examine strengths as well as problems and to focus on the needs of individuals within the context of their family and community. The Family Resource Coalition has assumed a leadership role in this area. It is designing new instruments, based on data collected nationwide, and is identifying new procedures for frontline practice. A second strategy is to assign a lead case manager who is responsible for ensuring that needed services are delivered and that all available resources are used appropriately.

Instituting Cross-Disciplinary and Cultural Training

Philosophical differences among service providers can be reduced through cross-disciplinary training of educators, health practitioners, mental health counselors, social workers, and juvenile justice officials. Such training seeks to develop an understanding of how each profession approaches its work with families, the language that accompanies each discipline, and the resources that each provider can offer. Cultural training seeks to develop appropriate approaches for working with families from different backgrounds. Cross-disciplinary and cultural training should be incorporated in both preservice and inservice training and should address the need for frontline staff and managers to have new skills.

"It is hard to frame initiatives so that they are popular. Marketing and selling our message [to the public] is important. We have to explain that it [investing in children] is in [the public's] self-interest."
LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL

Soliciting Public Involvement

Research conducted by public opinion experts indicates that the public is tired of statistics and negative messages. It understands that children are in trouble. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich has suggested that government's role is no longer simply to publicize the problem but to provide citizens with specific ideas about what they can do to help, such as reading to their children, volunteering in schools, serving as mentors for teen mothers, and watching out for one another's children. Polling experts suggest that in order to create a mandate for fundamental reform, policymakers need to link the public to emotions and feelings and to make the problem personally relevant. The current problems do not just affect poor kids; they affect all kids and all families.[16]

"We need to do a better job of publicizing the things that government does that work."
DIRECTOR, LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Communicating Successes

Government also needs to do a better job of communicating its successes. Government helps many individuals, for example, by ensuring that children are cared for in licensed facilities, by helping welfare mothers enroll in school and later find a job, by teaching parents how to help their child succeed in school through parent education programs, and by strengthening families so that children can remain in their own homes. Regardless of how small the gains, policymakers need to develop communications plans so that these efforts

become the front-page news. Consumers also can be strong allies in sharing good news by advocating what works and explaining reform efforts.

"Managers must help sustain new environments that promote innovation. They also need to be willing to accept failure that results from experimentation."
STATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSIONER

Changing the Environment

One strategy commonly used to change organizational attitudes is to create an environment where innovation and experimentation are encouraged and rewarded. This can be accomplished by changing employee performance systems to reward interagency coordination, by moving decisionmaking down to the lowest possible level, and by conducting intra-agency and interagency training.

For example, Florida recently approved legislation designed to encourage communities to own and manage their local delivery systems. It is premised on the belief that direct services can be provided more effectively at the community level. Local governing boards set goals, assess needs, develop and approve service delivery plans, provide budget and policy oversight, and help select and evaluate the district administrator. The boards are given budget and personnel authority so that staff and resources can be put to their best use. Moreover, communities are allowed to disregard state regulations if they believe they can produce better outcomes than can be attained under existing guidelines.

In South Carolina all frontline workers, supervisors, and county directors participated in training to help them assess how they do their jobs. The training also sought to help them focus more on prevention and on meeting the needs of the entire family, rather than the needs of individual family members.

"You have to have community buy-in to succeed."
LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Building Coalitions and Targeting Resources

The challenges presented by politics are perhaps the most daunting. Research on services integration and collaboration provides little guidance, and current efforts offer few recommendations. Several individuals did suggest three possible strategies for addressing powerful constituent groups and demands for immediate solutions. The first strategy is to develop a new constituency for children by building broad public support for change. This can be accomplished by increasing public awareness of the problems of all children and how these issues impact the lives of everyone.

Closely related, the second strategy emphasizes the use of detailed information on the cost of failing to act and the potential savings that better outcomes can produce. For example, a recent report on school readiness by the National Governors' Association indicated that if all four-year-olds who were eligible for Head Start in 1990 received two years of quality early childhood education, their graduation rate would increase from 46 percent to 65 percent. The potential savings from costs avoided in welfare and crime were estimated to be $3.46 billion, with an estimated $7.92 billion in additional revenue generated by increased productivity.[17] Care must be taken not to overpromise and to emphasize that potential savings will only be realized ten to fifteen years later.

The third strategy for overcoming political challenges is to target significant resources on children and families living in poor neighborhoods. Schorr suggests that a strategic investment in comprehensive services, reformed schools, improved housing and public safety, revitalized communities, and expanded economic and job opportunities would do much to reverse both family and neighborhood disintegration. This approach may have broad public support because some results could be seen rather quickly and because it focuses on strengthening families

by rebuilding community institutions—schools, churches, businesses, neighborhood centers, and recreational centers—that support families. The crucial element of this strategy is to focus on systemic reform in many areas all at once rather than engage in incremental change in a few areas.[18]

Ideally, resources should be targeted to the poorest communities in order to maximize impact. Moreover, eligibility requirements should be modified so that everyone in the targeted area receives services regardless of individual circumstances. Several foundations are experimenting with variations of this strategy, which should provide valuable lessons for future initiatives.

Developing Collective Ownership

"Making collaboration work requires getting everyone involved early."
DIRECTOR, LOCAL CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT

The strategy of choice for overcoming issues of turf and power is to build collective ownership for reform efforts. Government, community, business, and foundation leaders who participated in the Institute for Educational Leadership's "National Dialogue on Leadership for Collaboration" offer several suggestions for reaching this goal.[19]

- *Share leadership.* This reduces dependency on one individual and makes everyone a champion of reform.
- *Rotate meeting sites and discussion leaders.* This reinforces the sense that there is a shared problem that requires a shared solution and helps individuals become more familiar with one another's territory.
- *Provide "orientation" as new partners become a part of reform efforts.* Over time, new individuals will want to be involved, and each brings additional resources and different perspectives. They will need background information on previous work. They also will need time to adapt to how the group works together and time to develop commitment to the vision.
- *Ensure that the vision of the reform coalition reflects the perspectives of its members.* Partners in the initiative will need to be able to describe to their boards and constituencies how the group's efforts will lead to better outcomes for children and families.
- *Manage conflict.* Those involved in the reform effort should have a strategy for working through the inevitable conflicts that arise when individuals with different perspectives come together. Recognizing conflict and addressing it quickly helps make the group stronger and more willing to tackle complex challenges.

The Challenges of the System

"To effect real change, the structures and systems that support state and local governments must change." LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL

Identifying Systems Barriers

The second category of barriers cited in the HEW report and identified in the focus groups and interviews with state and local policymakers were those factors related to the size and complexity of the human services system. System challenges are found primarily in the administration of programs and services. They are endemic to government agencies because they stem from the different statutes that created the programs and the administrative structures that subsequently evolved. System challenges begin with the lack of a national policy framework for services for children and families and the structure of congressional committees that approve legislation. They encompass issues of policy, coordination, authority and responsibility, intergovernmental relations, funding, communication, commitment, labor relations and personnel, and leadership.

"What the country needs is a long-term vision of success—like President Kennedy's 'Man on the Moon.'"
PROGRAM MANAGER, MAYOR'S OFFICE

Lack of a Policy Framework

The lack of a national policy framework for children and family services has resulted in the haphazard growth of specialized direct service agencies, state and local coalitions, and various national organizations. These institutions are symbolically linked to improving outcomes for children and families, but they are rarely connected to one another. Federal, state, and local governments have a plethora of sanctioned coordinating bodies whose members meet week after week and then return to their agencies and organizations to conduct business as usual.

Federal and state legislation frequently includes mandates to coordinate with existing programs but fails to include specific outcomes the coordination activity is expected to accomplish. For example, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, the Family Support Act, the Job Training Partnership Act, and the Child and Adolescent Service Program all require states to develop interagency councils to coordinate planning and service delivery as a condition for receiving federal funds. These mandates to collaborate are issued through different funding streams that focus on many of the same families. One community identified at least six different coordinating councils—an early intervention council, an intergovernmental council for youth, a human resource investment council, a coalition for better child care, advocates for the homeless, and a literacy coalition—that are mandated by a different federal or state statute or regulation and that have a separate focus. More than one individual was serving on at least three different councils. Yet, there still was widespread disagreement on the need for these groups to work together.

"We dont have a clearly articulated philosophy regarding children and families, which leads to a lack of cohesive policymaking across state agencies."
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

In addition to the lack of a national framework, several states report that there is no consistent agenda for children and family services at the state level. This encourages policy to be developed incrementally in response to specific issues. Programs and policies frequently are unrelated and often are contradictory. One state revealed that different state agencies had awarded small grants to various local organizations to develop programs to reduce teen pregnancies; the grants were awarded with no knowledge of what each agency was doing and with no requirement for local entities to work together. Although the resulting duplication was not a problem in and of itself because the need generally exceeded the supply, the funding for such programs would have had a greater impact if all available resources had been combined. Integration not only reduces the costs of administering several small grants, but it also makes it easier for individuals to obtain services.

"We could put more money into direct services if we eliminated all the 'middlemen.' Our current funding comes from the federal government, through the state, then the region and county, and finally to us."
LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDER

"The process of agreeing to a common agenda was difficult. There was a lot of suspicion. Egos got in the way. Many at the table did not have the authority to make decisions. We frequently met just to be meeting, not to really get anything done."
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Diffused Authority and Responsibility

The locus of authority and responsibility is another system barrier. States and localities report that in many instances, the individuals at the table do not have the decisionmaking authority or the ability to commit agency resources to collaborative efforts. In addition, no one has the authority or the responsibility to make reasonable exceptions to established rules and procedures. This is true of government-funded programs and programs funded by private foundations and/or special grants. Shifting authority and decisionmaking from state government to local government or to local planning entities is also problematic.

Although the focus generally is on vertical interactions among federal, state, and local governments, horizontal relations among separate governing entities at the same level are another important factor in systemic reform. One state noted that it had 87 counties, 14 tribal governments, and more than 400 school districts, each with its own governing structure and policies and procedures. These structures make it difficult to reach agreement on missions and goals and on regulations and procedures.

Yet another system complexity derives from the way in which state policymakers achieve their position. For example, some agency heads are elected (e.g., the state superintendent of schools), while others are appointed by the Governor (e.g., the state health director). Still others are hired by boards and commissions (e.g., the state human services commissioner). This diversity of control makes it difficult to reach consensus among cabinet-level staff and further complicates the implementation of consistent policy across various departments.

Funding Complexities

Although the method by which funding flows to states and localities is identified in the research as a technical barrier, it is included here as a system barrier because it involves multiple levels of government. As the number of domestic programs has multiplied, federal funds have been distributed through a variety of mechanisms, including:

- from the federal government to states and subsequently to localities (e.g., the Child Care and Development Block Grant);
- from the federal government directly to local governments (e.g., the Community Development Block Grant); and
- from the federal government directly to local providers (e.g., Head Start).

Such a financing structure makes it extremely difficult to weave a comprehensive system out of disparate parts. It complicates efforts to reach consensus on goals, roles, and procedures in implementing programs and services.

"Different rules and regulations from the department of social services, the department of education, federal Chapter 1 programs, and Head Start programs make it difficult to create an integrated system."
PROGRAM MANAGER,
STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Categorical funding and foundation grants often dictate what services can be provided, to whom, to how many, and under what conditions. The inability to use resources flexibly to meet consumer needs prohibits the creation of more effective and efficient service delivery systems. Fiscal fragmentation is further compounded by the differing eligibility requirements, reporting and accounting requirements, and reimbursement procedures of various programs.

Inadequate Communication

Communication was frequently cited as a barrier to more responsive systems. Without a comprehensive strategic plan for serving children and families that is widely disseminated, agencies muddle along with little awareness of what their counterparts are doing, what programs are being implemented, or what the results are. Communication must flow within agencies so that the various divisions and units have a clear understanding of how their efforts contribute to the broad organizational mission. Gaining the support of private nonprofit organizations, especially those with contracts for services, also is critical to successful communications planning.

"Collaboration is time consuming and you are not rewarded for it. It has been imposed on top of other duties of existing staff."
DISTRICT SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Lack of Commitment

Another system barrier is the lack of commitment to interagency collaboration. Research and recent experiences indicate that working together is a difficult and time-consuming process. This is especially true in the early stages of building trust and camaraderie among the group. Without agency commitment to the process, staff are frequently left to decide whether to participate in a meeting or to meet the obligations of their existing positions. Particularly at the local level, where staff are responsible for crisis interventions that may not wait until an interagency planning meeting is over, sustained collaboration is hard to accomplish.

"Staff don't get paid to collaborate. They get paid to keep error rates low and to follow the rules."
DIRECTOR, COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

Ineffective Personnel Management

Finally, several state and local representatives stated that union contracts and state civil service systems frequently present system barriers to change. For example, in an effort to get parents more involved in their children's education, an elementary school arranged to have teachers visit parents at their offices and to schedule more convenient appointments after regular school hours. The principal reported that union officials viewed this activity as working "off the clock." They indicated that teachers were not allowed to visit parents in their workplaces or see them after hours without violating the terms of their existing labor agreement.

The nation's civil service system was implemented nearly a century ago to ensure merit in state hiring procedures. Unfortunately, rigid job classifications and elaborate procedures for hiring and firing have made the system so complex that it no longer functions to recruit the best and the brightest for government service. Instead, classification experts and personnel administrators concentrate on administering exams according to complex rules, placing the

"The state needs to do a better job of sharing information and program data with communities. The state collects it, but we never see it."
PROGRAM MANAGER,
LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

top scorers in existing vacancies, and determining bumping routes. Yet another deterrent to improved systems is pay raises that are based on length of service rather than performance or merit. In addition, agency staff generally are evaluated on the extent to which they follow administrative procedures and on the number of audit exceptions in their caseload rather than on how well they work as a team or what their impact is on family outcomes.

Overcoming Systems Barriers

Lessons from prior and recent experiences indicate that overcoming systems barriers is perhaps the most difficult task in fundamental reform efforts. The barriers are inherent in bureaucratic organizations. Strong leadership, commitment, and the ability to think differently are required in order to seize the opportunity to improve services for children and families.

Providing Leadership and Creating a Vision

Past and current initiatives suggest that one strategy for reducing system challenges is to create an environment for change. This can be accomplished through quality leadership at both the state and local levels. Strong leaders are needed to motivate the appropriate players to function outside of their traditional institutions and to rise above the bureaucratic constraints imposed on all government programs. Effective leaders are optimists who create environments in which excellence becomes the only acceptable standard of performance and in which people are constantly striving to reach their full potential. Finally, leadership involves challenging traditional ways of thinking and a willingness to go against the norm.

In addition to being eternal optimists, Governors and other state policymakers must vocalize a clear vision that cuts across agency missions and objectives. Local authorities—including mayors' offices, school boards, courts, and law enforcement agencies—also must be aggressive in promoting change. The vision for change should be included in a strategic action plan that clearly defines goals and objectives, specific action steps for implementation, and specific outcomes for children and families.

Two examples of explicit visions and strategic plans are Kentucky's Education Reform Act (KERA of 1990) and Tennessee's Children's Plan. As the forerunner in implementing comprehensive education reform, KERA sets forth a comprehensive framework to create a system of schools that provides each child with an equal opportunity to obtain an adequate education. The key provision of the legislation is the establishment of student performance outcomes and a requirement that schools help all students successfully meet them. All other provisions support this basic premise. The Children's Plan is another major reform initiative that is designed to bring about a new philosophy and new policies to serve Tennessee's troubled youth.

Delegating Authority

Governors and state agency directors can delegate authority and responsibility to ensure that those at the table can make decisions. They can then make sure that the decisions are implemented throughout the agency. In addition, they can see that efforts to integrate services are institutionalized by pushing the change effort down to the lowest levels of the organization. This will help ensure that the momentum will not be lost when key leaders leave.

Colorado's State Efforts for Early Childhood Services Team demonstrates how one state has moved the reform effort into the ranks of institutions. Created by the Governor's Families and Children Cabinet Council, the interagency workgroup is composed of management-level representatives from the Departments of Education, Social Services, Institutions, Health, and Mental Health. It is charged with developing and implementing a collaborative plan to meet the needs of the state's children.

Ohio's eight cross-agency issue groups also seek to move change into organizations. The eight issues the workgroups are addressing are case management; assessment and screening; inhome services; crisis response and respite care; prevention; specialized services with schools; specialized service capacity; and evaluation and accountability. The members of the groups share information about how each individual system operates and advise the Governor's Family and Children First Cabinet Council on how to streamline the service delivery system.

Combining Coordinating Bodies

Federal and state statutes that mandate coordination should be examined to determine where there is overlap and how different entities can be consolidated to develop more comprehensive approaches and strategies for meeting children and family needs. A human services commissioner from one state suggested that though there may be a more effective method of organizing, participants in the current categorical coordinating efforts had widened their perspective beyond their individual programs. He suggested that progress be defined as success in making the "boxes" even bigger so that the participating agencies and organizations can see more of the picture and how they can interact with even more programs.

Establishing Interagency Councils

Overcoming the complexity of intergovernmental relations requires a willingness to come together to address common concerns. It requires focusing on the two or three issues on which all stakeholders can agree rather than dealing with the twenty issues that create dissension. It involves a willingness to share power and to create conditions where everyone gives and everyone gains. As one county commissioner stated, "It involves checking egos at the door and bringing differences to the table to be dealt with in an open and honest manner." The most common mechanism being used to address these relationships is the creation of an interagency council composed of all the key stakeholders—elected officials, agency heads, business leaders, and consumers—to create the vision, set goals and objectives, plan and oversee policies, review and modify budgets, develop strategic action plans, grant waivers of rules and procedures, and evaluate results. Other individuals—mid-level managers, frontline workers, and advocates—can be brought into the process to conduct focus groups on the vision and action plan, ensure that policies can be put into operation, and collect data for evaluation. State and local councils also can be instrumental in identifying federal barriers and pushing for changes in regulations and statutes.

Using Fiscal Intermediaries

One promising strategy for overcoming disparate financing structures is the creation of public-private entities that serve as the intermediary between state and federal agencies and local organizations. The Ounce of Prevention fund program in Illinois has successfully nurtured innovative programs to address a variety of family needs by assuming responsibility for applying for grants, integrating diverse funding streams, performing accounting duties, and providing technical assistance and training to enhance program quality.

The Riverside (California) County Child Care Consortium is another example of a nonprofit corporation that was created to provide leadership and assistance in the establishment and support of quality child care programs. Staffed by volunteers, the consortium helps establish financial partnerships between the public and private sectors; develops grants and proposals; establishes fiscal authority, responsibility, and accountability; serves as the liaison between private and public child care agencies; allocates funds; coordinates joint program ventures; explores and develops unique

models of child care service delivery; and facilitates collaborative efforts for professional development.

Simplifying Eligibility

The best strategy for dealing with conflicting eligibility requirements is for the federal government to streamline eligibility for programs designed to serve the same families by making income and asset definitions consistent, broadening the definition of family, and making reporting and accounting requirements consistent. This process should begin with a careful examination of authorizing statutes and the rationale behind existing rules to determine what can be eliminated or simplified. The American Public Welfare Association's Task Force on Program Coordination identified fifty-seven policy differences between the Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Food Stamp programs. Resolution of these conflicting criteria was included as a recommendation in the report from the Welfare Simplification and Coordination Advisory Committee, *Time for A Change: Remaking the Nation's Welfare System.*[20] Extending eligibility to all individuals who live in one geographic area is another streamlining strategy.

Federal grants shouldn't just fund demonstrations. The feds need to continue to support projects that demonstrate success."
DIRECTOR, FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Improving Communication Flow

Selling the vision for change is a crucial task of leaders and mid-level managers. It includes building a coalition of support for new ideas by marketing these ideas to others in their organizations and to key constituencies. Effective communication strategies incorporate mechanisms for ensuring that ideas from people throughout the organization—technical and support staff, frontline workers, supervisors, and managers—receive a fair hearing. This can be accomplished by flattening the layers of supervisors and managers and by encouraging participatory management where all employees have a say in how the vision is achieved. Equally important is ensuring that staff have access to cutting-edge information in their field and time for reading, networking, and training in order to stay current in their field and learn state-of-the-art techniques.

Adopting Incentives for Change

Systemic change cannot occur without a commitment throughout the organization. All staff must be empowered to think creatively and to challenge old assumptions about how their job should be done. They must be motivated by being valued and nurtured through caring organizational environments and cultures that respect all employees. This requires creating structures and incentives for collaboration that reward teamwork and creative thinking. Where possible, workloads should be reduced and staff should be given time to attend interagency meetings. All personnel should be encouraged to experiment with a new idea, without fear of reprisal when it does not work. Other incentives might include employee recognition days where selected staff are given front-door parking spaces or are acknowledged in employee newsletters, small cash bonuses for innovative ideas, or the distribution of annual savings realized through new ways of doing business.

In addition, funders can continue to provide resources for long-term planning and change, as many now are doing, rather than support short-term demonstration initiatives. The Children's Initiative of the PEW Charitable Trusts is one example of a long-term commitment to systemic reform. The initiative will focus on three states to test a comprehensive approach to serving children and families while simultaneously stimulating regulatory, legislative, and policy changes over a period of eleven years.[21]

"The rank and file are anxious to help make changes. They are hungry for new opportunities. All they need is a chance to participate and to exercise their own judgment in helping families."
REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

Reforming Personnel Systems

A few states are beginning to decentralize their civil service system by turning more authority for staffing decisions over to agencies while ensuring that the hiring process conforms to all local, state, and federal laws. The first report from the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service also suggests that states and localities can improve hiring and promotion practices by:[22]

- adopting selection criteria other than written tests, which may be biased, out-of-date, expensive to construct and administer, and poor in predicting performance;
- expanding the list of candidates that are forwarded for interviews beyond the top three;
- implementing aggressive recruitment strategies such as intern programs to bring the most talented people into public service;
- limiting the use of seniority and veteran preference rules in determining who gets hired, who gets promoted, and who gets protected during reductions in force;
- reducing the number of job classifications from several hundred or even thousand to only several dozen, with provisions to distinguish levels of expertise; and
- simplifying pay and promotion structures by using a small number of broad pay bands to allow greater flexibility in rewarding good employees, encourage movement across agencies, and facilitate reassignment.

Florida is attempting to implement these changes. Based on legislation approved in 1991, the state initiated fundamental reform in its civil service system to develop a broad-based job classification system, eliminate cumbersome rules and procedures, provide increased flexibility for agencies to manage, and foster modern management principles such as total quality management.

The Challenges of Resources

"We need to focus more on prevention and early intervention rather than on crisis and major problems." DIRECTOR, FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Identifying Resource Barriers

The two major resource barriers are funding and staff capacity. As states continue to face severe budget constraints and increased demands for services, the problems of the current system become even more pronounced. At the same time, many policymakers see the lack of fiscal resources as a catalyst for fundamental reform in large human services agencies. Several states, including New Mexico and South Carolina, have used the prospect of limited resources as the springboard for a comprehensive review of existing programs and services, individuals served, funding sources and amounts, administrative agencies, and results achieved. From this analysis, these states have documented the need for change and have produced specific recommendations that are being supported by the Governor, state legislators, advocates, members of the business community, and state and local providers.

As institutions make the paradigm shifts from focusing on crisis intervention to emphasizing prevention and from monitoring and auditing to providing technical assistance and support, staff at all levels will need new skills. These skills include the ability to work with other professionals both within and outside their own agency, with families as partners, and within different levels of the organization in participatory management structures. New ways of doing business also require new skills in problemsolving, advocacy, marketing, decisionmaking, communication, and assessment. Reform also will require learning how to function in less hierarchical and bureaucratic systems.

"Scarce public dollars and increasing demands for services make it hard to find additional monies to experiment with systems change." STATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSIONER

Limited Funding

Research on prior services integration efforts reveals that limited resources pit agency against agency and service provider against service provider. Several individuals engaged in current initiatives note that competition over scarce resources is a severe barrier to improved systems for children and families. Service capacity is the ability to meet the demands of those seeking services. Limited service capacity contributes to tensions over resource allocations. Many believe that in times of limited resources, all available dollars should go to funding direct services rather than to funding services integration activities. This is a tenable objective in the short run. However, if service delivery systems are to be improved over the long term, funding is needed to support collaborative planning efforts, analyze existing programs and services, and create integrated automated data systems.

Fiscal limitations also make it more difficult to make the paradigm shift from simply focusing on crisis intervention to implementing a more prevention-oriented strategy. It is hard to move dollars to family

support services, such as counseling, parenting education, and information and referral, when there are waiting lists for subsidized child care and when children are lingering needlessly in foster homes.

Funding difficulties also contribute to larger caseloads, less staff to address increased demands for services, and little or no staff training. Because reformed service systems will require agency staff to have new skills, the lack of staff capacity is frequently cited as a barrier to services integration. At the service delivery level, resources are needed to recruit qualified staff and to improve working conditions. A 1990 study of early childhood education programs by the U.S. General Accounting Office revealed that the salaries of early childhood education teachers were about half those of public elementary school teachers.[23] A study of youth programs in 1988 notes that the median salary of social workers with a master's degree in social work "falls below the median salaries for most school teachers (who work for nine months), mail carriers, fire fighters, registered nurses, and auto salesmen."[24]

Categorical Funding

The categorical nature of funding sources and the methods of financing affect the nature and outcomes of services. Funding strategies help determine priorities and shape the incentives that drive service systems. Categorical funding emerged in response to the clearly identifiable problems of needy target groups. As new programs were created to address more specialized needs, they were simply layered on top of existing programs. This has resulted in a complex and hard-to-manage array of disparate resources, with no overall strategy for how they should fit together.

"Too often, the system waits until families are in trouble before helping them access needed services."
PROGRAM MANAGER, STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Categorical grants define eligibility in narrow terms and promote the labeling of specific problems. This forces frontline staff to "fit" individuals and families into programs and services that solve only part of their dilemma rather than address the broader and underlying problems that created the crisis. This crisis orientation of categorical funding creates another barrier to comprehensive services. Funding generally is available only in response to an immediate problem that usually threatens family stability. This method of financing is due, in part, to the need to ration dollars to serve those deemed most at risk.

"Prevention is a long-term strategy, but we are short-term thinkers. We need to change our thinking."
LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Categorical funding also contributes to short-range thinking and planning. By focusing on prevention, even with increased initial expenditures, the demand for high-cost services later on are substantially reduced. For example, research suggests that every dollar invested in the prenatal component of the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) saves as much as $3.00 in short-term hospital costs, as much as $3.13 in Medicaid costs for newborns and mothers, and as much as $3.90 in Medicaid costs for newborns alone. Other studies indicate that every dollar invested in childhood immunizations saves $10 in later medical costs, and that every dollar invested in quality preschool education returns $3.00 because of lower costs of special education, public assistance, and crime.[25]

"Early childhood staff are undertrained and underpaid, with high turnover that undermines the quality and consistency of the program. It is difficult to recruit qualified staff."
HEAD START TEACHER

Last, unlike education and many health programs, social services is not a universal entitlement. Strict eligibility criteria limit providers' ability to design services to meet the unique needs of multiproblem children and families. Other program requirements, such as those related to the duration and intensity of services, make it extremely difficult to create and maintain comprehensive services for large numbers of children and families in need. Because many private nonprofit organizations receive funding from federal, state, and local

governments, the program criteria also restrict the services they can provide and their ability to operate from a more holistic framework.

Lack of Staff Capacity

A more holistic approach to serving children and families will require that frontline staff learn how to engage individuals in a dialogue about their needs; acquire new techniques for assessing problems from a family perspective over a span of time; and feel comfortable in designing new approaches to meeting family needs and, subsequently, in assuming responsibility for ensuring that preestablished outcomes are achieved.

Professionals generally receive their training in narrow fields from universities that are hierarchically structured and that put students at the bottom. To function in the new system that is envisioned, these individuals will need to adapt to more individualized and responsive programs and environments. The report from the McKnight Foundation reflects the essence of this dilemma.

> *Staff don't necessarily want flexibility at first. Our environment is bureaucratic. Bureaucracy is protective. It provides rules and procedures that become comfortable. Bureaucracy gives staff something to blame for lack of responsiveness to clients' needs. Staff have to learn to be flexible and responsive, learn the advantages and be nurtured into seeing how changing will help them fulfill our mission. It's not enough to say, 'Be responsive. Do whatever it takes to attain our mission.' That's not their experience. They have to learn what that means.*[36]

Sid Gardner, director of the Center for Collaboration for Children at the California State University at Fullerton, identifies these additional barriers to the implementation of collaborative preservice and inservice training:[37]

- academic norms that make it difficult to change the content of courses in universities;
- an additive rather than reallocation mentality (i.e., adding other units, courses, money, or pilot projects that sit by themselves, separate from the system);
- professional credentialing and accreditation processes; and
- professionals who think that the goal of interprofessional training is to train individuals as generalists, who may displace established professionals, thus transforming the discussion from a technical issue to a political debate.

Overcoming Resource Barriers

Given the nation's economic condition, it is unlikely that substantial new funding will be available in the near future. As noted in conversations with state and national policymakers, new resources also probably will not be forthcoming until fundamental changes are made in existing programs and services to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

Leveraging Dollars

One strategy several states have tried in order to increase resources is to leverage additional federal resources by using private dollars for the required state match and by carefully examining current spending to maximize federal entitlement funds. In a few states, parent fees for child care are being used as the state match to draw down additional funding under Title IV-A child care programs. In other states, private dollars are being used to match federal funding for the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training program. Both approaches require explicit agreements between the parties to give the state agency full control of all available dollars.

Maximizing federal entitlement funds involves several actions, such as increasing eligibility for services under Title IV-E child welfare services, making claims for services provided to Title IV-E eligible children being served by agencies other than the single state agency responsible for those services, and

filing claims for all allowable costs under Medicaid and Title IV-E. Again, these approaches require interagency agreements that identify eligibility rules, allowable costs, claims procedures, and audit responsibilities. They also require amendments to the state's Title IV-E plan, Medicaid plan, and cost allocation plan to reflect the new agreements. These strategies are being used in Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee to help finance their reform efforts.[28]

Addressing Categorical Funding

States and localities are experimenting with four key strategies to reduce barriers encountered with categorical funding. Each includes formulating clear goals and objectives, developing programs and services to accomplish the goals, and identifying specific outcomes to measure effectiveness. The goals drive the financing strategies rather than the reverse, which is currently the case. It is critical to almost all services integration efforts to have a small amount of base funding for planning, program development, and coordination.

The first approach involves joint funding of services between agencies to achieve common goals. Agencies share the costs of services that they otherwise would provide independently, thus increasing the likelihood of more coordinated service delivery at the local level. This approach may include reassigning staff and redirecting funding from one priority to another. Tennessee's family preservation services is an example of how child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice agencies each pay a share of the costs for these services. The state also agreed to accept a uniform program model for all families, designed a common curriculum for training, and agreed to uniform contract specifications for service providers, thus reducing administrative costs for all programs. Pennsylvania has combined funding from twelve different programs to create startup grants for family centers. The request for proposals will require consolidated applications developed jointly by the education, human services, and Head Start agencies.[29]

A second approach is to allow greater flexibility in the use of state-appropriated funds to meet family needs by delegating to local entities the authority to determine their exact use. The shift in financing is away from centralized, categorical state decisionmaking to more flexible local control over how resources are used. By reducing or removing "strings," Iowa has decategorized several funding sources into a single pool in order to afford demonstration counties discretion in spending the funds to create a more customer-centered service system. Maryland has given local jurisdictions the authority to use funds originally appropriated for out-of-home placements, such as foster care, for services, such as intensive counseling, needed to stabilize families and prevent the removal of children from their homes.[30]

Third, a number of states are using a strategy of frontline financing through flexible dollars. Decisionmaking regarding the use of resources rests with the worker who is responsible for delivering the services. These "flex funds" can come from a variety of sources, including redirected funds and new state or federal funds, and are usually limited to small amounts. For example, North Dakota's family service workers use flex funds to pay for rent deposits, emergency food, substance abuse treatment, emergency treatment, and other services necessary to preserve families.[31]

A fourth strategy for reducing the complexities of categorical funding is to combine resources from various programs into a single funding stream. This approach decentralizes decisionmaking about program priorities from the state to the county level. Combining categorical funding into a block grant also reduces local administrative costs by having only one set of rules for the single state allocation. This approach is similar to recommendation number fifty-one in the

report from the National Performance Review, which suggests that localities be given the authority to combine grants of less than $40 million simply by notifying the federal government. The report also suggests that localities could choose which regulations to follow under the block grant where there is conflicting guidance.[32]

At the national level, the National Performance Review recommends that Congress consolidate fifty-five categorical grants in the areas of job training, education, water quality, defense conversion, environmental management, and motor carrier safety. The proposal would consolidate about twenty education, employment, and training programs totaling $5.5 billion in fiscal 1993 and ten other education programs funded at about $1.6 billion. It is also recommended that ten environmental programs, six water quality programs, and six defense conversion programs be combined.[33]

Investing in Professional Development

In a reformed service delivery system, interprofessional training must be designed to facilitate communication and cooperation among members of different disciplines. Professionals need to learn about other professionals' basic concepts, technical language, and skills so they know how to communicate and work together effectively. Such training focuses on "building bridges" so that members of interprofessional teams can substitute for one another, as well as enhance and complement the special expertise and perspectives of team members.

Training also can be used to give workers a different view of the world, a different conceptual framework, and a different lens through which to view their work. In addition, training can be used as a lever to transform the culture of an organization by making managers and frontline workers the agents of change.

New approaches to serving families require a commitment to disseminating information about new practices quickly. They also challenge traditional methods of teaching, including classroom instruction, textbooks on theory, and practice manuals, because these tools are no longer appropriate for providing frontline staff with the new skills they require. In their place, several experts suggest inservice training in exemplary service settings and programs, case examples, on-the-job training, observation of experienced workers, and constructive criticism of actual practice.[34]

The Center for Collaboration for Children, located at California State University at Fullerton, is in the forefront of trying to create a new type of professional who understands the complexity of the current system; functions and thinks in family-centered, community-based ways; and acts as a change agent to create a less categorical system that is driven by outcomes. The center uses collaborative seminars to bring undergraduates from four departments—nursing, education, criminal justice, and social work—together to discuss multiproblem cases. The center also uses family-centered, integrated programs for field placements and attempts to send students from different disciplines to the same agency for placement. These student placement experiences are subsequently integrated into the regular curriculum of the different disciplines.[35]

Shifting State Paradigms

To be effective, agencies will need to create environments that encourage and support frontline staff to build on the strengths of families and to work across traditional agency boundaries. This support should be based on enhanced fiscal, organizational, political, and management capacity that enables more effective services to survive. Both Colorado and Ohio are shifting the role of the state agency from a monitoring and auditing role to one that provides support and technical assistance in order to help counties function in new ways.

Technical Challenges

"Our current programs are designed to limit eligibility and to discourage people from applying because we make it so complicated. The paperwork that is required is too time consuming and often is overwhelming." PROGRAM MANAGER, MAYOR'S OFFICE

Identifying Technical Challenges

The services integration initiatives in the majority of states have not matured enough to provide information about specific federal or state barriers such as statutes or regulations that are impeding reform. However, their experiences do provide valuable insight about the technical challenges that inhibit better outcomes for children and their families. These challenges relate to the administration and design of programs and services.

Insufficient Time

Research on the early HEW initiatives reveals that the considerable time required for planning and implementation may be a barrier. Although the HEW report notes that comprehensive initiatives take time to get "up and running," it suggests that trouble "getting off the ground" may be a sign of other barriers such as a lack of staff capacity, a lack of political support, and an absence of specified outcomes. One state recently reported that planning and then implementing strategies for long-term change is extremely frustrating because results are not readily evident. Many months of hard work to change the way agencies function can go by, with little to show for the effort.

"Each state agency has its own management information system. There is no mechanism to transfer data between agencies or to see which agencies are serving which families with what services."
PROGRAM MANAGER,
STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Ineffective Data Management Systems

Research from early services integration efforts indicates that one of the primary technical barriers is the lack of capacity to collect, analyze, and use data effectively. Recent initiatives cite the lack of comprehensive information systems as a critical barrier to efforts:

- to determine which agencies are serving which families;
- to track whether services have been received;
- to determine what other services the family may be eligible for; and
- to track funding from different sources.

The lack of comprehensive information systems also increases the amount of paperwork that individuals must complete because there is no central system for documenting the general family information (e.g., the names of family members, address, income, and assets) that is needed to apply for most categorical programs.

There are four major challenges to creating comprehensive information systems that can provide data about outcomes at the individual, family, community, and systems

levels. First, various stakeholders and constituencies require different types of information—on children, families, and programs—at different stages to answer different questions. For example, initial information is needed to alert policymakers to a problem and to understand the factors contributing to the problem. Other types of information are needed to describe the process of implementing an intervention. Still different data are needed to determine outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

Second, though the need for information systems is recognized, the resources to pay for them often are not available. Many federal and state programs as well as new reform initiatives require comprehensive evaluations but provide limited funds to pay for gathering the information needed to conduct them.

"We were told that the federal regulations wouldn't allow us to purchase drivers' licenses for JOBS participants when that was all they needed in order to go to work. We later found out that it was allowed, but the state didn't want to do it."
SOCIAL WORKER, COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

Third, comprehensive systems will need to address differences among the component information systems, including the level of governance—local, state, and federal; the kinds of data they house; the types of hardware they run on; and the types of reports they generate. Consideration also must be given to the reporting requirements of different programs and the need for monitoring information to ensure program quality and accountability (e.g., data on family needs and strengths, family impacts, service plans, consumer feedback, services used, service gaps, and barriers). States and localities have very little experience in creating integrated systems to address these issues and often do not have the staff capacity to develop and implement them without extensive and costly technical assistance.

Finally, the lack of information about the sources and amounts of resources flowing into specific counties, communities, and neighborhoods, as well as the lack of demographic data on populations within these areas, make it difficult to do comprehensive planning and to implement more effective programs. In addition, frontline staff generally are limited to information about a family's use of current services within their own program or department. Rarely do they have access to historical information about the family's service utilization, data on services being received from other programs or organizations, or diagnostic information from other sources.

Differing Regulatory Interpretations

Interviews with state and local policymakers and providers who are engaged in comprehensive reform efforts reveal that they are not far enough along in the change process to identify specific regulatory barriers. State and local staff do report that state policies and procedures, as well as state interpretation of federal regulations, often add to the difficulties of coordinating existing programs. One comment frequently heard from local staff is, "The federal regulations won't allow us to do that." Further investigation often reveals that either the federal requirement has been misinterpreted or that the state has imposed additional program restrictions.

"Workers will not make decisions for fear of an audit."
DIRECTOR, LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

The disparity between the meaning of federal and state regulations and their interpretation by auditors further complicates fundamental change. For example, in an effort to avoid audit exceptions, state and local income maintenance offices are filled with procedure manuals that carefully define who can do what, when, and to whom. These very narrow guidelines stifle the creativity of workers and their ability to respond effectively to the needs of children and families. Frontline staff are intimidated by these rules; they are afraid to make any decisions for fear of increasing the quality control error rate—by which their performance is measured—and subsequently risking federal fiscal sanctions.

"We don't have the time or resources to really explore what works, to visit model programs, or to talk to others doing the same thing."
DIRECTOR, FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Dearth of Information on Promising Approaches

Another significant barrier to services integration efforts is the lack of information about what works and what other states and communities have tried. Although national researchers and members of think tanks are inundated with publications highlighting various efforts across the country, policymakers in states and communities are begging for more specific information on "model" programs, on how to implement systemic reform, and on how to take pilot programs to scale.

Confidentiality Restrictions

Confidentiality is another major technical barrier cited by state and local policymakers. Rules and procedures governing client confidentiality are diverse. They arise in federal and state statutes, in federal and state regulations, and through state policies and procedures. They also result from agency and staff practices.

"We need more help in developing outcomes and we need more appropriate evaluation models."
PROGRAM MANAGER,
STATE SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Design Difficulties

The foremost challenge to systemic reform initiatives is developing specific outcome measures to evaluate whether the change is having an impact. Very little information exists on what outcomes should be used or who should establish them. There also is a dearth of information on how to effectively evaluate collaborative activities. Still another hurdle frequently mentioned is the lack of information on whether new governance structures are needed and, if so, what the new structures should look like and how they should function. Closely related is the lack of information on how to ensure that all participating agencies are held equally accountable for results and a scarcity of tested approaches for developing reliable cost projections and long-term savings. States and localities also are struggling with how to replicate successful model programs in other communities and how to take successful efforts to scale. Another barrier is a lack of instruments and techniques for identifying and assessing at-risk families.

"It's sad that in order for a young mother I was working with to get into a treatment program she had to voluntarily place her two children in foster care. Because she no longer had the children, she became ineligible for AFDC and subsequently lost her Section 8 housing. The treatment program won't let her see her kids for the first three weeks, she has no income, and nowhere to go when she completes treatment. I don't understand why it had to be so hard for her to get help."
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKER

Lack of Access

Technical challenges also encompass broad issues of accessibility. Interviews with state and local policymakers indicate that the plethora of existing programs and services is not what is really needed to address the problems of children and families. For example, several individuals stated that there were very few services to address substance abuse, especially among pregnant women and mothers with young children. In addition, many needed services are not available in some communities, or are hard to access, because of inflexible hours of operation, location, and burdensome documentation requirements. The lack of planning and funding for outreach activities was identified as another access barrier. Finally, several states and localities cited the lack of transportation as a significant barrier.

"Transportation is a major barrier to clients receiving services. A lot of programs have buses, but state and federal restrictions keep them from being used more effectively."
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Overcoming Technical Barriers

Many technical barriers can be addressed through staff training and the creation of a new environment for the administration and delivery of social services. A clear vision with

specific, measurable goals and objectives can do much to alleviate misconceptions and to change the focus of agencies and organizations. In addition, state agencies can change their roles from monitoring and regulating local programs to providing technical assistance and support to communities that are struggling to develop new ways of doing business. Ideally, technical assistance should be provided by interagency teams to model the behavior that is desired by local agencies and organizations.

Providing Time and Support for Change

The major recommendation for overcoming the challenge of the amount of time needed to implement reform is to recognize that changing organizations from a hierarchical and bureaucratic model to a more entrepreneurial model is a very long and difficult process. Policymakers also suggest that the early investment in time results in greater effectiveness over the long run. Strategies for ensuring success include:[56]

- making all meetings voluntary;
- creating subgroups for problemsolving so that more individuals are involved and the workload is evenly distributed;
- maintaining a strong vision;
- ensuring that staff have sufficient time to work with others and providing support for them in these efforts;
- rewarding staff through promotions, professional development opportunities, and recognition programs;
- providing opportunities such as joint training for individuals to practice team building and working together by making small sums of money available for activities that facilitate collaboration; and
- arranging retreats for agency directors to enable them to reflect on the vision, address issues brought to them by mid-level managers, and review strategies for and progress toward meeting specified outcomes.

Finally, policymakers suggest that attitudes, skills, and support for collaboration must be incorporated into the day-to-day activities of each organization that is involved in these kinds of initiatives.

Developing Integrated Information Systems

Several states and communities have recognized the opportunities created by information technologies to provide services more effectively. These technologies include computer systems that allow client tracking over time and across organizations; instantaneous access to and exchange of data among organizations; electronic transfer of benefits from a central agency to individual accounts; and more efficient means to collect, manage, and analyze information. These technologies are usually referred to as information systems.

Many individuals currently involved in initiatives agree that systemic reform will require complex information systems and integrated databases to link and merge data across agencies and services. They suggest the following as key functions and activities:[57]

- streamlining the intake and eligibility process for multiple programs;
- tracking services and referrals for families across programs and organizations for case management purposes;
- tracking multiple funding sources for services and obtaining reimbursement;
- analyzing data across organizations for purposes of planning, evaluation, policy development, and program improvement; and
- ensuring accountability across organizations for child, family, and systems outcomes.

Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services has an integrated management information system that assigns one identifying number when the client initially enters the system. This identifier is used by all programs, which allows cross-referencing

across programs, reduces the collection of redundant data, and lessens the paperwork burden for individuals. In addition, the management information system allows other agencies to access mainframe data directly, thus facilitating the analysis of cross-program use. For example, eligibility workers have access by computer to vehicle registration information and to child immunization records, which enables them to verify assets and to remind the mother that her child needs to get his shots. Confidentiality is protected by limiting worker access based on the "need to know" and the type of information that is collected. All workers do not have access to all information contained in the database and information on, for example, mental health, is not a part of the system.

Maryland's Services Reform Initiative (SRI) has one of the most advanced statewide case management information systems. HomeBase includes a referral section that captures demographic information that is transferred to all SRI sites; a case management section that links information on individuals to information on families and, subsequently, to information on individual and family goals, outcomes, and strategies; and an ACTLOG section that captures case managers' day-to-day activities such as interviews and counseling sessions conducted, telephone calls made, meetings attended, and services provided.

"Funding should be tied to outcomes for children and families, not just to the numbers served."
PROGRAM MANAGER, STATE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Maximizing Flexibility

Misunderstanding and misinterpretations by agency staff can be reduced by throwing out existing policy and procedure manuals and starting over with a careful review of federal and state statutes. Rather than explicitly telling frontline staff how to perform their jobs, state agencies should establish specific outcomes and hold individuals responsible for achieving them. A key lesson from prior reform initiatives is that what works in one community may not work in other parts of the state. Frontline staff must be given the skills and support they need to adapt rules and procedures to meet the unique needs of the consumers in their communities. At the same time, federal agencies should reduce their regulatory intrusiveness by reducing internal regulations by 50 percent as recommended by Vice President Gore and the National Performance Review.[38]

Sharing Best Practices

Providing information on current research and effective programs and strategies to states and communities can be accomplished through a number of mechanisms. Federal agencies can serve as a clearinghouse for state reform efforts and provide technical assistance in linking funding sources, streamlining eligibility processes, and developing consistent definitions across programs and services. National associations and organizations can be more diligent in sharing information about promising initiatives with their members and in notifying constituencies of relevant publications. Federal agencies and foundations can provide funding to determine the most effective strategies for sharing information and subsequently assist organizations at all levels—federal, state, and local—in implementing these strategies. The Clearinghouse on Services Integration, operated by the National Center for Services Integration and established by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is one attempt to address the information void. The new guide, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services*, was jointly produced by the Department of Education and HHS and provides valuable information on forming collaborative partnerships. More than 10,000 copies have been distributed to state and local policymakers interested in working together.

Addressing Confidentiality

A recent study by the Youth Law Center concludes that confidentiality restrictions do not have to be significant barriers to interagency collaboration. The report, *Glass Walls: Confidentiality Provisions and Interagency Collaborations*, indicates that confidentiality restrictions are not absolute but instead balance individual interests in privacy and agency interests in providing effective services. It clarifies that information that does not identify specific individuals is not confidential and may be shared freely between and among organizations. Information in directories, such as those for colleges and universities, also is not confidential."

Information sharing that occurs during telephone conversations and information that is explicitly authorized by statute can be exchanged without formal mechanisms or written releases. Client consent, in the form of written releases, is authorized by the majority of statutes. Interagency agreements, memorandums of understanding, contracts, and court orders are other mechanisms states are using to resolve issues of confidentiality.

To maintain confidentiality in management information systems, the report suggests that the purposes of such systems should be clarified and that information in the system should be limited to that needed to fulfill those purposes. Securing cooperation from all agencies in developing and operating the system, providing adequate notice to individuals that their information is being entered into an information system and will be accessible to other agencies for specific purposes, maintaining several levels of security in the system, and providing sufficient training for staff are other critical components of an integrated data system.

"Agencies should reward success by having the dollars follow positive outcomes. We succeeded in reducing teen pregnancies and our funding was cut because the money was tied to the number of clients we served, not to what we accomplished."
LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Establishing Outcomes

The challenge posed by audits and excessive monitoring can be eliminated by moving away from a system focused on following explicit rules and regulations toward one based on achieving specific outcomes—performance standards—for children and their families. In their guide for creating new accountability systems, Jack Brizius and Michael Campbell explain that performance standards are estimates of the outcomes that an effective program or policy is expected to produce. For example, when a state sets a goal of reducing its infant mortality rate to a certain level in five years, it has established a standard for judging the performance of its health and social services policies.

Setting performance standards or outcomes is a challenging task. Care must be taken not to set the measures so high that a policy or program has no chance of succeeding. At the same time, outcomes must be ambitious enough to motivate those responsible for achieving them to do their best. Good outcome measures should be easily understood and agreed to, both by those who will judge the success of policies and programs and by those who will be held accountable. The most realistic standards are those that have been jointly developed by these two groups.

It is important that accountability systems include measures of policy or systems accountability to determine whether state programs and actions are achieving broad goals and objectives, and measures of program or individual accountability to determine whether particular programs are producing the desired outcomes for program participants and their families. Brizius and Campbell highlight several advantages of outcomes-based accountability systems.

- Policy and performance accountability can give political leaders "good news" about policies and programs that enable them to take credit for success, and it can warn them of "bad news" early on.

- Policy and performance accountability can increase the willingness of program managers to experiment with new ways of meeting the goals and objectives set by political leaders. When the system is focused on the results of services rather than on the process of delivering services, staff are less likely to stick to standard operating procedures in an effort to protect themselves from criticism if something goes wrong.
- Policy and performance accountability can speed the rate at which innovations spread throughout a system as successful practices appear in reports to political leaders.
- Policy and performance accountability is a more accurate measure and provides more useful information for making crucial resource allocation decisions. Outcomes-based measures are clear reflections of what is working, thus supporting Governors and other policymakers in making difficult budget decisions.
- The allocation of resources based on outcomes can free both policymakers and service providers from having to specify through rules and regulations exactly what frontline staff and providers must do.

Finally, outcomes-based accountability systems can assist federal and state agencies in reviewing existing programs to determine their effectiveness, identifying gaps in services, and making the hard choices needed to create a more comprehensive system for children and families.

Investing in Evaluation

Quality evaluations help inform current practices and can serve as the catalyst for systemic reform and federal and state legislation. For example, research on state welfare-to-work initiatives laid the foundation for the Family Support Act of 1988. Evaluation also plays a critical role in building capacity for systems change and in ensuring accountability. Its primary goal is to determine whether initiatives are doing what they were designed to do, for example, making systems more family-centered and consumer-driven. Evaluations can provide valuable information about what is working, helping reformers learn from mistakes and make mid-course corrections. The best evaluations are based on common sense and are designed with significant input from those involved in planning and implementing the initiative.

Services integration efforts involving multiple agencies create a demand for evaluation strategies and tools that are different from those used to judge the effectiveness and efficiency of individual programs. Although little is known about how current reform efforts are being evaluated, research suggests that the evaluation of collaborative initiatives should be multidimensional and interactive; practitioners and state and local officials should be involved in the development of tools and strategies used for the evaluation. Research also suggests that the following principles should guide quality evaluations.[41]

- Evaluation should be used to answer questions that will aid in future planning and modifications.
- Those engaged in the evaluation should have a clear understanding of the project goals and the strategies that are being used to achieve them. This includes an understanding of the responsibilities of frontline staff.
- Quality evaluations use different approaches for answering questions. Surveys and interviews of many individuals, including agency directors, frontline staff, managers, and families, can provide different perspectives on project impacts. Case studies can identify project activities and unanticipated consequences. Content analyses of case files can reveal common elements and strategies that have proven successful or ineffective in improving family outcomes. Finally, indicators of child and family well-being can help measure impacts of systemic reforms and help ensure that the initiative is on the right track.

- Quality evaluations have broad-based ownership. They are viewed as useful by the state, the localities, the initiative, and those involved. Individuals charged with completing evaluation forms see them as a tool to provide feedback about their work to help ensure accuracy and completeness in securing information. Training is crucial for helping staff understand their responsibilities and the importance of the evaluation.
- Quality evaluations are developed jointly by those engaged in the initiative and the evaluator and are conducted by both parties. A second strategy is to involve project staff and consumers in the process evaluation and an expert evaluator in the impact analysis.
- Quality evaluations are designed during the planning and implementation phase of the initiative but are not conducted until the reform is in place and has been fine-tuned. This strategy avoids premature judgments about impacts or failures.

Research further suggests that the evaluation of services integration efforts should include strategies to measure process, program, service delivery, and system outcomes.

Crafting Governance Structures

Little information exists about effective structures for governing collaborative partnerships. Although some argue that new governance structures are not needed, these initiatives do require some mechanism for sharing power and addressing new roles and responsibilities. Participants in the "National Dialogue on Leadership for Collaboration" offer the following guidance for addressing issues of governance.[42]

- Collaborative initiatives must be inclusive and representative. Participating individuals must believe that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Vision, goals, and objectives, not institutional imperatives, must drive the governance structure. The structure must be flexible to adapt to new partners and changing circumstances.
- Initiatives may need different governance structures at different levels for different purposes. For example, structures or mechanisms are needed to link policy frameworks among the various agencies and to facilitate communication between states and localities. Mechanisms also are needed to implement changes in service delivery and to solicit input from consumers and other nonparticipants.
- New language is needed to describe the concepts of "top-down" and "bottom-up," which characterize the traditional hierarchical government. One alternative is to use the term "domain" to describe the various interests represented in services integration initiatives.

Finally, the participants noted that governing remains an open question that will have to be addressed in the near future.

Expanding Model Programs

The question of how to expand innovative programs beyond the pilot phase remains unanswered. However, a recent conference on "The Transfer of Innovation in State and Local Government" sponsored by the Governors' Center at Duke University and the Ford Foundation concluded that one key element in the dissemination of successful programs is considering the organizational environment of the new sites, including the capacity of existing institutions to change. Other recommendations to facilitate replication include the following.[43]

- Identify the core elements of successful programs and then determine which elements fit which communities and what changes, if any, need to be made to the basic concept.

- Do not use a "cookie-cutter" approach. Communities must be empowered with a new concept or idea and then allowed to become owners and to adapt the concept or idea to fit their unique needs.
- Have strong advocates, make good use of the media, have money for travel, and understand that what is transferred will look different in different communities.
- Make sure that there is support from the original and receiving organization, including strong support from management.
- Use the appropriate jargon for the group to which the initiative is being "sold." For example, business people usually relate to numbers and cost-benefit ratios, while government agencies respond to how a new program or reform strategy will lessen public pressure for better services.
- Instill confidence in the groups starting new programs. Replication requires planting ideas and finding champions to nurture them.

Finally, successful replication requires an understanding by all of the stakeholders that the diffusion of good ideas across government is a public good and should be encouraged. The message is that no one will be harmed and many may be helped.

Improving Access

There are several promising strategies for increasing the availability and accessibility of services. These include:

- conducting a community needs assessment to identify existing services and hosting consumer focus groups to determine what is needed;
- developing consolidated application forms for similar programs such as child care programs, child health services, and job training programs;
- transferring basic eligibility information electronically among agencies and programs;
- outstationing frontline staff in community-based facilities such as schools, community centers, and public housing complexes;
- extending agency hours by at least one day per week;
- colocating frontline staff from various programs in one building;
- establishing "one-stop" service centers with single intake and referral systems and designating a primary case worker to ensure that needed services are delivered and that individuals do not fall through the cracks;
- using paraprofessionals as outreach workers in neighborhoods with large numbers of high-risk families; and
- making full use of existing transportation systems, including vans for the elderly and disabled, child care vans, and school buses.

The majority of these strategies can be easily implemented within existing budgets and will do much to improve the service delivery system.

Implications for Policymakers

Renewed battles over turf, demands for information on model programs, and tensions between new goals and old rules are evidence of a system in transition. These challenges present Governors with an opportunity to help set a clear agenda for long-term change that will survive beyond their term of office. With their continued support of the National Education Goals, Governors have proven that reform efforts can be sustained over the long run. By focusing on enhancing school readiness and addressing public concern about children, they can harness the momentum that has developed in response to the National Education Goals to address systemic problems in social services. At least two states—Kentucky and South Carolina—already have acknowledged that reform in other systems is needed to support children's lifelong learning by incorporating these issues into their strategic plans for fundamental reform in education.

Next Steps

Governors and other policymakers at the state and local levels are critical to ensuring that public faith in government is restored and that services become more effective and efficient. Accomplishing these goals requires strong leaders who have a clear vision of a brighter future for communities and states. It includes sharing the vision with all of the stakeholders and making changes based on their input.

Systemic reform requires helping individuals inside and outside government understand the need for change by providing forums for the exchange of ideas. This can be done by taking the message directly to the public through town hall meetings, roundtable discussions, and focus groups. Finally, policymakers can engage those responsible for translating policy into practice by making them active participants in crafting solutions.

In addition, policymakers must create an environment where local innovation is supported and encouraged. To accomplish this, policymakers should do more "steering" and leave "rowing" to state and local program managers. Steering focuses on defining the problem in its entirety, engaging many stakeholders in the solution, establishing policy, leveraging resources, funding rowing organizations (both public and private, internal and external), and evaluating performance. Rowing focuses on operational functions, such as carrying out established policies, defining processes, and producing results. Moving decisionmaking down to the lowest possible level also contributes to an environment that is conducive to change.[44]

State fiscal constraints can provide additional impetus for examining the maze of human services programs. Policymakers can put more emphasis on clearly defining priorities and on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of

program expenditures by focusing on outcome measures. This priority-setting process should result in more entrepreneurial approaches to government and more decentralized decisionmaking in return for improved results.

At the same time, policymakers face the difficult task of balancing the need for preventive services and the demand to address current crises. Political realities often make it difficult to change the nature of institutions and the programs they administer. Addressing these realities requires a careful examination of what works and a willingness to invest only in those programs that produce the desired results. It requires prioritizing programs and challenging the status quo.

Finally, Governors and other policymakers will need to continue serving as champions of reform by communicating their vision at every opportunity. It also will be important to constantly point out the links between the lack of comprehensive quality services for at-risk children and families and the escalating costs of teen pregnancies, juvenile delinquency, welfare, community disintegration, violence, and prisons. Creating a constituency for change will require a convincing argument that reform is in everyone's best interest and is directly related to the nation's well-being.

Changing the nation's human services system will not be easy. Although progress is not readily visible, there are signs that states and localities are moving in the right direction. The challenge is to build on this momentum to create a new environment where each child is viewed as a valuable resource and families are supported in fulfilling their responsibilities. Only then can the nation flourish as a just and prosperous society.

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Appendixes

Appendix A:
Protocol for National Center for Services Integration Focus Groups

What Gets in the Way of More Effective Services for Children and Families?

Purpose

To work with three states to identify and discuss federal, state, and local impediments (i.e., regulations, policies, procedures, and practices) to creating more effective and efficient programs and services for children and families and better mechanisms through which services are delivered.

Goals and Outcomes

- What are your goals for children and family services? What are you trying to accomplish?
- How will you know that you have accomplished your goals? What evidence will you look for? In the short term? In the long term?
- Is services integration necessary to achieve these goals? Why?
- What do you mean by services integration?
- Is there a consensus among agencies and organizations (i.e., state and local, private and nonprofit, on the goals, strategies, and outcomes)?

Programs and Services

- What specific programs and services are you working with to try to achieve these goals? Why were they selected?

Service Barriers

- What are the current barriers to the receipt of necessary services? Do the barriers relate to the type of service, quality, supply, eligibility, current practice of how services are delivered, staff capacity or orientation, or legal or administrative impediments?

System Barriers

- What are the most pressing barriers—both within agencies and across agencies—to changing systems at the local, state, and national levels that must be addressed to improve outcomes for children and families?
- Are there certain problems that are specific to certain agencies and organizations? What are they?
- Are there problems in coordinating specific programs? What are they?
- What types of incentives could be offered to overcome these barriers?

State Roles and Responsibilities

- What suggestions do you have for reducing or eliminating the barriers you have identified?

Appendix B:

Survey Instrument

State Approaches to Improving Services for Children and Families: A Survey of the National Governors' Association's Center for Policy Research in Conjunction with The National Center for Services Integration

States and communities have taken the lead in implementing innovative strategies to address the multiple problems of today's low-income families. Revived from the 1960s' War on Poverty, coordination, collaboration, and services integration are among the strategies being used to try to streamline a highly fragmented service delivery system and to make sense of the multitude of programs that are designed to address the interrelated needs of children and families. Services integration is also seen as a method to stretch limited resources and make services more effective.

Services integration often has different meanings for different individuals. The National Center for Services Integration (NCSI) has defined the term as a process by which a range of educational, health, and social services are delivered in a coordinated way to improve outcomes for individuals and families. NCSI believes that to be effective, services integration initiatives should emphasize:

- comprehensive services;
- early intervention and prevention;
- consumer- and family-oriented responses (i.e., clients are seen as customers of agency services and are treated with respect and dignity, and workers build on clients' strengths rather than focus on their problems);
- family and individual outcomes; and
- provider accountability.

Efforts to create more effective service delivery systems range from grassroots, community initiatives, such as "one-stop" service centers and school-based family support centers, to systemic change at the state level, including restructuring of government agencies, interagency planning, and pooled funding for services at the local level.

This questionnaire is designed to identify the state strategies that have been implemented to improve services for children and families, identify the fundamental issues they have encountered in their efforts, and identify strategies for reducing or eliminating barriers to more effective and efficient programs and services. We are also asking states to identify current state and local initiatives to include in the NCSI Clearinghouse on services integration efforts. The responses to the survey will be analyzed and included in a short report to be distributed to Governors' aides, state health and human service commissioners, and chief state school officers. The report will also be included in the NCSI Clearinghouse.

To facilitate analysis, the questions have been grouped into three broad areas: policy, administrative, and operational issues. The responses should reflect state-level issues and concerns even though there may be local demonstration projects supported by the changes in state policy. Please answer each question as fully as possible and feel free to attach supplemental materials where relevant. To be included in the analysis, responses must be typed and must be received at NGA

by close of business on Friday, January 29, 1993. Questions about the survey should be directed to Linda McCart at (202) 624-5336.

Please include the name and telephone number of a contact person for the survey. We would also appreciate the name and telephone number of the Governor's policy aide for children and family services.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

State Approaches to Improving Services for Children and Families

Policy Issues

1. Describe the state-level mechanisms that are used to tie together your state's various efforts to improve services for children and families. For example, several states have established offices for children that are responsible for ensuring coordination among and between various programs. Other states have formed task forces for children or have hired special coordinators. Still others have reorganized agency responsibilities or attempted to legislate coordination.
2. If your state has established a coordinating body for children and/or family services, please describe the goals and objectives; responsibilities; functions; and level of funding and source(s) for this entity. Please give the name and telephone number of the individual responsible for this entity.
3. What strategies have been used to develop common goals and objectives for children and/or family services within your state? For developing comprehensive plans that reach across numerous agencies?
4. What types of incentives have you used (or could be offered) to get agencies to work together toward a common vision?
5. What strategies have been developed to help agencies shift services toward early intervention and prevention and away from crisis intervention (e.g., expanded Head Start programs, mandatory kindergarten, before- and after-school programs, family preservation services and family support programs, outreach programs for at-risk pregnant mothers, and/or increased well-child care)?
6. Where are the most pressing barriers—both within agencies and across agencies—to changing systems at the state level (i.e., changing the way agencies operate), that must be addressed in order to improve outcomes for children and families?
7. Has a statewide needs assessment been conducted? If yes, who was consulted? What were the results? What action was taken based on the results/ recommendations? If no, why not? Have community needs assessments been conducted or planned? Who was/will be consulted? What were the results? What action was taken?
8. What efforts have been made to involve the business community in creating more effective and efficient services for children and families?

Administrative Issues

1. What strategies or incentives have been used to overcome turf issues among agencies and programs? Were they successful? Why? Why not? Were/are turf issues more significant among specific agencies? If so, which agencies?
2. What strategies/techniques have been used to replicate successful pilot programs? To take programs to scale? Were they successful? Why? Why not?
3. What mechanisms have been established to determine whether the new initiatives are having an impact? How will effectiveness be measured?
4. Have specific, measurable outcomes been established for children and families within your state? If so, what are they? If not yet established, do you have plans to do so? Will both public and private

providers be held accountable for these outcomes? How will their performance be monitored?

Operational Issues

1. What are the current barriers to services that children and families need? Do the barriers relate to the types of service, quality, supply, eligibility, current practice of how services are delivered, staff capacity or orientation, and/or legal or administrative impediments?
2. What efforts have been taken to make services and programs more "family-friendly"? For example, enhanced staff training, lower caseloads, case management, "one-stop" service centers, family resource centers, and/or increased outreach to consumers?
3. What strategies have been implemented to create a range of services that will meet the needs of children and families over time? This includes both horizontal coordination (comprehensiveness) and vertical coordination (support over time).